

Gather together this season and prevent flu.

Winter is a special time for family and community. It is time to gather for feasts and celebration. It is time for sharing laughter, wisdom, and tradition – not a time for sharing the flu.

Compared to the general U.S. population, American Indians and Alaska Natives are more likely than others to catch the flu, get sicker, be hospitalized and even die from flu-related illness. Last season, American Indians and Alaskan Natives were four times more likely to die from 2009 H1N1 flu than other groups. This season can be different. Protect yourself, your family, and your community by getting your flu vaccine now.

The flu vaccine is safe, and recommended for everyone 6 months of age and older. It is the best way to protect yourself and your loved ones from the flu. Getting the flu vaccine each year can keep you from getting sick and keep you from spreading the flu to children, elders, and those with certain medical conditions—these groups can get very sick from flu.

Although flu can make anyone sick, it causes more problems for babies, pregnant women, elders, and people with certain medical conditions, like diabetes, asthma or heart problems. Your flu vaccine helps protect you and everyone in your community from the flu.

There are lots of places to get the flu vaccine. You can get yours from trusted sources including your tribal health system, Indian Health Service (IHS), or Alaska Community Health Aide. You can even get a flu vaccine at some local grocery stores and pharmacies. Call your doctor or community nurse to get more information about getting the flu vaccine.

Protecting your community against the flu is a shared responsibility. Start a new tradition as you gather together this season. Get vaccinated!

For more information call your state health department, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) at 1-800-CDC-INFO (4636), or visit CDC on the web at www.cdc.gov/flu. For free posters for American Indian and Alaska Native communities, please visit <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/freeresources/print.htm>.